

**BACKGORUND INFORMATION (WRAC MTC):**  
**SUPPORT CHANGING LAMC SECTION 56.15 BICYCLING RIDING – SIDEWALKS TO READ:**  
**NO E-BICYCLES ON SIDEWALKS OR BOARDWALKS IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

*The \_\_\_\_\_ NC/CC, a member of the Westside Regional Alliance of Councils (WRAC), supports changing the Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 56.15. BICYCLE RIDING – SIDEWALKS to read: No person shall ride, operate or use an e-bicycle on a sidewalk or boardwalk in the City of Los Angeles.*

Reference: [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los\\_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-138429](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/lamc/0-0-0-138429)

A request to Councilmembers Park, Yaroslavsky, Hutt and Raman to submit a motion to amend LAMC 56.15 to ban e-bicycles (e-bikes) from sidewalks and boardwalks in the City of Los Angeles, to address public safety concerns and rising accidents, and injuries and deaths from collisions between e-bikes and pedestrians.

A request to the Mayor of Los Angeles to suggestion and/or approve a new ordinance banning e-bikes from the sidewalks or boardwalks and to enforce the new City ordinance.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **A. Electric Bicycles (E-Bikes) Treated as Bicycles Under State Law**

California Chaptered Bill AB 1096 (2015) treated Class 1 and Class 2 electric bikes (e-bikes) as regular bicycles under the law. This means they share the same rules of the road as bicycles and don't require special licenses or registration. Specifically, e-bikes are defined as bicycles with fully operable pedals and a motor of less than 750 watts. Class 1 e-bikes offer pedal assistance up to 20 mph, while Class 2 e-bikes can use throttle power up to 20 mph. While Class 1 and 2 e-bikes have no age restrictions, Class 3 e-bikes require riders to be 16 years or older. In addition, riders of Class 1 and 2 e-bikes under 18 must wear helmets and all riders of Class 3 e-bikes must wear helmets.

AB 1096 primarily focuses on defining and regulating e-bikes in California. However, whether or not bicycles, including e-bikes, are permitted on sidewalks and boardwalks is determined by local ordinances and regulations, not by AB 1096.

Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) section 56.15 deals with bicycling riding on the sidewalk. Currently, this Code has not been updated to include a specific mention of e-bikes. It has, however, been amended by Los Angeles City Council Ordinances on several different occasions, as you can see below:

*SEC. 56.15. BICYCLE RIDING – SIDEWALKS.*

*(Amended by Ord. No. 148,990, Eff. 12/17/76.)*

1. *No person shall ride, operate or use a bicycle, unicycle, skateboard, cart, wagon, wheelchair, rollerskates, or any other device moved exclusively by human power, on a sidewalk, bikeway or boardwalk in a willful or wanton disregard for the safety of persons or property. (Amended by Ord. No. 166,189, Eff. 10/7/90.)*

**Proposed addition to the following text:**

**No person shall ride, operate or use an electric bicycle (e-bike) on a sidewalk or boardwalk in the City of Los Angeles.**

2. *No person shall ride, operate or use a bicycle or unicycle on Ocean Front Walk between Marine Street and Via Marina within the City of Los Angeles, except that bicycle or unicycle riding shall be permitted along the bicycle path adjacent to Ocean Front Walk between Marine Street and Washington Boulevard. (Amended by Ord. No. 153,474, Eff. 4/12/80.)*

**Proposed change to the text:**

**Replace (bicycle or unicycle) with (bicycle, electric bicycle (e-bike) or unicycle)**

3. *No person shall operate on a beach bicycle path, or on an area of a beach which is set aside for bicycle or unicycle use, any bicycle or tricycle which provides for side-by-side seating thereon or which has affixed thereto any attachment or appendage which protrudes from the side of the bicycle or tricycle and is used or designed to carry another person or persons thereon.*

**Proposed change to the text:**

**Replace (bicycle or unicycle) with (bicycle, electric bicycle (e-bike) or unicycle)**

**Replace (bicycle or tricycle) with (bicycle, electric bicycle (e-bike) or tricycle)**

4. *(Repealed by Ord. No. 187,667, Eff. 12/19/22.)*

A new Ordinance to further update this section of the LAMC to specifically address what e-bikes can or cannot do is within the purview of the Los Angeles City Council. The Mayor of Los Angeles can also submit a proposal to amend LAMC 56.15 to address e-bikes to the City Council.

The Cities of [Santa Monica](#), [Inglewood](#) and [Manhattan Beach](#) have all passed ordinances banning bicycles, and e-bikes, from riding on the sidewalks.

## **B. Electric Scooters (E-Scooters) are Already Banned from Sidewalks**

In contrast to e-bikes, California Chaptered Bill AB2989 (2018) states that it is illegal to ride the motorized scooters (e-scooters) on sidewalk, except when it is leaving or entering a property and needs to traverse the sidewalk to do so. In addition, the bill also reiterates that existing law prohibits a person from operating a motorized scooter at a speed in excess of 15 miles per hour.

So in 2018, the California legislature perceived e-scooters to be a greater threat to pedestrians on the sidewalk than e-bikes. But are they, really?

### C. E-bikes versus Pedestrians

E-scooters typically weigh between 20 and 40 pounds, while e-bikes are typically heavier, on average between 40 and 70 pounds (per Google AI.) Given that e-bikes are allowed to travel 20 miles an hour, 5 miles an hour faster than the e-scooters, this makes them potentially more dangerous in a collision with a pedestrian than an e-scooter. This is especially true when operated by less experienced riders, who aren't as skilled in calculating the distance it takes to bring an e-bike to a stop or interacting with pedestrians on the sidewalk.

### D. E-bike Accidents and Injuries on the Rise

The main concern addressed by this motion is accidents and injuries as the result of collisions between e-bikes and pedestrians on a sidewalk or boardwalk. Unfortunately, a brief review of the scholarly literature did not result in finding a study that examined this specific concern.

However, in the article [Comparing injuries from e-scooters, e-bikes, and bicycles in the United States](#) by Hannah Younes in the June 2025 edition of the **Journal of Cycling and Micromobility Research**, the author discusses a the current rise in e-bike related injuries:

*The database includes nearly 14,000 micromobility-related injuries: 11,911 bicycle injuries, 1166 e-scooter injuries, and 655 e-bike injuries for 2021 and 2022 (Table 2). For both years, bicycle injuries make up the majority of micromobility injuries, which is in line with usage. What is interesting is the growing proportion of e-micromobility-related injuries, and particularly of e-bikes. E-bike-related injuries doubled from 2021 to 2022, an indication of uptake in usage in recent years.*

On the [KTLA 5 News website](#), they quote a 2024 article from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network that stated, overall:

*...e-bike injuries more than doubled every year, going from 751 in 2017 to 23,493 in 2022.*

*Injuries from riding e-scooters rose 45% over the same period, from 8,566 in 2017 to 56,847 in 2022, researchers found.*

It is clear that in a collision between an e-bike and a pedestrian, the pedestrian is the most vulnerable to injury, disability and death.